EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:  
REPORT OF THE ADHOC COMMITTEE ON  
SITING FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING

This is summary of the report prepared by David A. Lake, acting as the chair of the ISA Ad Hoc Committee on Siting for the Annual Meeting (Members included: George Andreopoulos, Soumita Basu, Laura J. Shepherd, and Birol Yesilada). The report was submitted February 28, 2019 for the 2019 Governing Council meeting in Toronto. The report was accepted by the Governing Council on March 26, 2019.

BACKGROUND
At the annual meeting of the Governing Council in Baltimore in 2017, the question was raised about the possibility of holding the ISA convention outside North America. This ad hoc committee was approved at the annual meeting of the ISA Governing Council in 2018 and appointed by President Pat James.

PRIMARY CONCLUSION: (CLICK HERE FOR FULL REPORT AND APPENDICES)
The report concludes that for the foreseeable future ISA cannot site its large annual convention outside of North America without dramatically increasing costs to attendees.

DISCUSSION
In ISA’s present model, ISA reserves room blocks at several large hotels, which then provide meeting space for free – assuming we fill the hotel blocks at a specific level. The key problem revealed in the non-North American city study and head-to-head comparison is that non-North American hotel venues do not provide meeting space sufficient for our current conference format. Rather, ISA would have to alter its format, reducing participation to that which could be provided in small hotels, or it would have to rent meeting space at a convention center at substantial additional cost.

Presuming that ISA does not want to reduce participation in ISA meetings, we focused on the alternative convention center model. The rental fee for convention centers varies, but is approximately $225,000 in London and $450,000 in the Czech Republic (the lowest cost city venues). With additional required minimum food and beverage costs and AV costs, it is estimated that the ISA meetings would run deficits of between $363,000 and $533,000, if held in London and Prague, respectively. This cost analysis does not include the higher hotel room costs that would be borne directly by members in most, if not all, the cities examined.

Another alternative, of course, is to charge much higher registration fees for the annual meeting. This has long been resisted at the Governing Council and by the membership more broadly.

A second alternative, which the committee endorses, but did not specifically investigate, is the current model that ISA is developing with summer regional meetings held outside North American (e.g., Hong Kong 2017, Quito 2018, Belgrade 2019 and more) alongside the history of smaller section/region meetings that allow for greater international participation. In our view, this appears the more viable route for enhancing international participation over the long run and insuring against changes in U.S. immigration policy in the short run.

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1 The complete list of cities explored in the analysis is: Barcelona, Berlin, Brussels, Frankfurt, Hong Kong, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Melbourne, Mexico City, Munich, Paris, Prague, Seoul, and Singapore.